## IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF RHODE ISLAND

\* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* CRIMINAL ACTION

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA \* 11-186-S

VS. \* AUGUST 7, 2012

JOSEPH CARAMADRE and \*
RAYMOUR RADHAKRISHNAN \*

RAYMOUR RADHAKRISHNAN \* PROVIDENCE, RI

HEARD BEFORE THE HONORABLE WILLIAM E. SMITH
DISTRICT JUDGE

(Defendant Raymour Radhakrishnan Motion to Proceed Pro Se)

## **APPEARANCES:**

FOR THE GOVERNMENT: LEE VILKER, AUSA

LEE VILKER, AUSA and JOHN P. McADAMS, AUSA

U.S. Attorney's Office

50 Kennedy Pĺaza

Providence, RI 02903

FOR THE DEFENDANT

Raymour Radhakrishnan: Olin Thompson, Esq.

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Suite 300

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Court Reporter: Anne M. Clayton, RPR

One Exchange Terrace Providence, RI 02903

Proceeding reported and produced by computer-aided stenography

7 AUGUST 2012 -- 2:40 P.M.

THE COURT: Good afternoon. This is the matter of the United States versus Raymour Radhakrishnan.

Let's have counsel identify themselves for the record, please.

MR. McADAMS: Good afternoon, your Honor. John McAdams and Lee Vilker on behalf of the United States.

MR. THOMPSON: Olin Thompson for Mr. Radhakrishnan, your Honor.

THE COURT: Thank you. I'm in receipt of notice filed by Mr. Thompson expressing the interest of Mr. Radhakrishnan to exercise his right to proceed in this matter pro se; and upon receiving this notice, I decided I wanted to hold a hearing, and then following up on that I received a motion from the Government for a hearing so I note that the Government filed a motion.

Mr. Thompson, before I address myself to
Mr. Radhakrishnan, do you want to say anything about
this notice that you filed?

MR. THOMPSON: Not anything more than that this was filed at the request of Mr. Radhakrishnan, and I have spent considerable time discussing it with him.

We're also in receipt of the Government's motion. He's received a copy of that and reviewed it, and he's prepared for any questions the Court has for

him.

THE COURT: All right. Does the Government want to say anything?

MR. McADAMS: Your Honor, I just, I guess, ask the Court as an initial matter with Mr. Radhakrishnan is to ask him whether or not it's his desire to proceed representing himself or whether there's some other issue going on that is instigating this, in other words, he's concerned about his relationship with his current counsel, because that would be a different line of inquiry for the Court to explore.

Beyond that, the purpose of filing the motion was simply to alert the Court to some of the issues that the Government thinks the Court should address.

Thank you.

THE COURT: Okay. Mr. Radhakrishnan, would you please stand up.

MR. RADHAKRISHNAN: Yes, your Honor.

THE COURT: I have a series of questions that I am going to ask you if we proceed with this, but I think Mr. McAdams makes a good point that I should ask you, initially, and I would like to know from you if this notice really is a reflection of your desire to actually represent yourself or if it is rather an expression of some dissatisfaction that you have with

the representation you're receiving from Mr. Thompson or your relationship with Mr. Thompson or otherwise a concern about the representation that you're receiving here from your court-appointed counsel, because those are really two different things.

MR. RADHAKRISHNAN: Your Honor, as I expressed to Mr. Thompson, I have been completely satisfied with his representation. This was a decision that I've made on my own voluntarily, and I do plan to proceed pro se, if the Court would allow.

THE COURT: All right. Now, I know that you've had a little bit of law school, what, a semester or so or a year or what?

MR. RADHAKRISHNAN: A semester, your Honor. Didn't even quite finish that.

THE COURT: All right. Well, you know enough and you're a smart enough individual to understand that a trial, particularly a criminal trial, is a very complicated matter and it's governed by technical rules, including the Rules of Evidence and the Rules of Criminal Procedure that, if you were to represent yourself, you would be required to follow and you would be held to, just like any other individual, any other person representing -- any other attorney representing a client. You understand that?

MR. RADHAKRISHNAN: I do, your Honor.

THE COURT: Now, representing yourself is not a matter of telling -- just telling a story, telling your story. You're not going to be able to necessarily do that if that's what you think you're going to be able to do. It's a matter of presenting the evidence and dealing with the evidence that the Government presents in a coherent and sensible way. Do you understand that?

MR. RADHAKRISHNAN: Yes, your Honor.

THE COURT: Now, if you fail to follow the rules as you're required to follow them, then you're going to put yourself in jeopardy. You can make and I will tell you I think it's likely that if you represent yourself you will make a mistake, and you will likely make a serious mistake during the course of the trial. And if you do that, it could irrevocably damage your case in front of the jury, and there will likely be nothing that you can do about that once you make that mistake. Do you understand that?

MR. RADHAKRISHNAN: Yes, your Honor.

THE COURT: Are you willing to live with the likelihood that you're going to make a mistake and you might hurt yourself?

MR. RADHAKRISHNAN: I don't believe I'm going to

be making any mistakes, your Honor, but I understand that in the past that's probably very, very likely.

THE COURT: Well, let me tell you something, experienced attorneys who know a lot more than you do about what's going on here make mistakes in trials.

And sometimes they make serious mistakes. I can virtually guarantee you you're going to make some mistakes in this trial. I don't know what they're going to be, but I know you're going to make mistakes; and if you do, there's no getting that back. If you're hurt by it, you have to live with it. Do you understand that?

MR. RADHAKRISHNAN: I understand, your Honor.

THE COURT: Now, you understand that if you begin making mistakes in the midst of the trial, it's not my job to keep you from going down a path that you shouldn't go down. I'm not necessarily going to try to guide you or coach you or keep you from making any kind of mistake. Do you understand that?

MR. RADHAKRISHNAN: Yes, your Honor.

THE COURT: And I will likely appoint

Mr. Thompson to be standby counsel for you if you go

forward with this, but it may be that he's going to be

unable as standby counsel to keep you from doing

something that you shouldn't do before you do it. Do

you understand that?

MR. RADHAKRISHNAN: Yes, your Honor.

THE COURT: And now, you understand that you will not be able to rely on Mr. Traini and Mr. Lepizzera, who represent Mr. Caramadre, to necessarily do things in the course of the trial like make objections or arguments that will help you out. It may be they don't want to help you out. It could be that they see that the interest of their client is different than your interest. So you might think that they're going to step up and do something like make an objection to something and they're not going to do it, leaving you by yourself, to fend for yourself. Do you understand that?

MR. RADHAKRISHNAN: Yes, your Honor.

THE COURT: You may not know whether they're staying quiet in a situation where you're getting damaged and you don't know enough about the Rules of Evidence to make an objection where you ought to be making objections and they're not helping you. Do you understand that situation could well occur?

MR. RADHAKRISHNAN: Yes, your Honor.

THE COURT: Now you understand that if you do this you can't make a complaint later that you didn't have an adequate defense or quality defense or that I

should have prevented you from doing this. You're waiving that. Do you understand that?

MR. RADHAKRISHNAN: Yes, your Honor.

THE COURT: Now, maybe the Government can help me out on this a little bit. I think I need to advise you about the seriousness of the charges against you, which you know are serious, but I've not sat down and tried to figure out what the potential penalties are for the crimes that you're charged with. Perhaps the Government has.

MR. McADAMS: Yes, your Honor, if I may approach the podium.

Your Honor, Mr. Radhakrishnan, as opposed to Mr. Caramadre, is charged in Counts I through XXVI with wire fraud offenses. Each count carries a maximum statutory offense of 20 years imprisonment, \$250,000 fine, or twice the gross gain or loss that resulted from the offense, as well as three years supervised release and \$100 special assessment. He's also charged in Counts XXVIII, XXIX and XXXI with mail fraud, each of which also carries a 20-year maximum statutory sentence, \$250,000 fine or twice the amount of gain or loss, and three years supervised release, as well as the special assessment.

He's charged in Count XXXIII with conspiracy to

commit offenses, mail fraud, wire fraud, identity theft, aggravated identity theft. That count carries a maximum statutory offense of five years imprisonment, \$250,000 fine and potentially twice the gain or loss involved in the case, as well as three years supervised release, and a special assessment of \$100.

He's charged in Counts XXXV through LIX inclusive with identity fraud in violation of 18 U.S.C. 1028(a)(7). And each of those counts carries a maximum statutory penalty of 15 years imprisonment, a \$250,000 fine, not more than twice the gain or loss, three years supervised release and the mandatory \$100 special assessment. And he's charged in Counts LX through LXIV inclusive with aggravated identity theft, each of which carries a mandatory minimum of two years imprisonment on top of whatever other sentence he might receive in this case, a \$250,000 fine and not more than twice the loss or gain, one year of supervised release and a mandatory special assessment.

And he's charged in Count LXV with money laundering, which carries a maximum offense of ten years imprisonment, \$250,000 fine and not more the twice the gain or loss, as well as three years supervised release and a \$100 mandatory special assessment.

Obviously, as well, your Honor, the sentencing guidelines will play a factor in the sentence that the Court determines in the event that Mr. Radhakrishnan is convicted of any of these offenses. I have not done a specific guideline calculation on Mr. Radhakrishnan, but we have looked sort of generally and without, you know, getting into the real fine details of it, I can represent to the Court that if convicted of all of these offenses, his guideline range will be well in excess of 15 years imprisonment at the low end of the guideline range. And of course, those guidelines are not binding on the Court, but that's something that Mr. Radhakrishnan should understand, that if he is convicted the Court will certainly be required to consider those guidelines.

THE COURT: How many counts are there with mandatory terms, the two-year mandatory consecutive?

MR. McADAMS: There are four counts -- excuse me, five counts of aggravated identity theft, Count LX, LXII, LXIII and LXIV, each of which carry the two-year mandatory minimum.

THE COURT: Okay. Thank you, Mr. McAdams.

Mr. Radhakrishnan, did you listen to Mr. McAdams outline the potential penalties here?

MR. RADHAKRISHNAN: Yes, your Honor.

THE COURT: I think it's fair to say, and I'm sure you've perceived from this that if you were convicted of some or all of these counts you face a potential sentence that is easily well in excess of ten years and could be in a range much higher than that.

So we're not dealing here with a minor accusation with a lenient potential penalty associated with it. You understand the seriousness of the potential penalties that could result if you're convicted in this case?

MR. RADHAKRISHNAN: Yes, I do, your Honor.

THE COURT: Now, I have to just tell you from my experience and from my heart that I've presided over a number of pro se trials. Every single one of them has been a disaster for the defendant. I've never seen a pro se defendant do a good job representing himself. I firmly believe you're making a very serious mistake by doing this. I think you stand the potential of doing serious harm to yourself if you do this.

You're a smart, young man. I have no doubt that you have a lot of confidence in your own intelligence and your ability, but I have to tell you that I really believe you're making a mistake and I ask you to please reconsider what you've decided to do here, because my job is to make sure there's a fair trial and to make

sure that defendants are treated fairly by the system. I don't have any dog in this fight other than to make sure that you and Mr. Caramadre get a fair trial, and I just feel I've seen enough and I know enough to know when I can see somebody's making a terrible mistake and that's what you're about to do.

So I just feel the right thing to do is to try to talk you out of it. I hope Mr. Thompson has tried to talk you out of it. And so if you'd like a little more time to think about it, I'm happy to give you that time. I'm happy to do whatever it takes to try to keep you from making what I think is a terrible mistake here.

MR. RADHAKRISHNAN: Your Honor, I appreciate your insight, and I must say that this was not an overnight decision. I have been contemplating it for years now while this investigation has been going on. I specifically made it well aware to the law schools that I applied to that the investigation was going on and that I was going to need a legal education. I unfortunately did not complete that legal education, but I do stand firm that I would like to move forward representing myself.

THE COURT: Okay. Let me tell you one other

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thing. I have a cynical and suspicious side to me, I suppose, that makes me think that there's something else afoot here, which I don't know what it might be, but I'm always suspicious if I see something that doesn't look right. And I want to tell you that if there is something else afoot here that I'm not going to let you derail this trial by any kind of a, you know, ill-conceived strategy to throw it off the rails at some point. I'm not going to let that happen. You don't even have to respond to this, but if that is something that's going on here, you should understand -- everyone should understand that I'm going to be very much on guard about that, and I'm not going to let that happen. So just keep that in mind. any reason, if this is not just a well-intentioned move on your part that you think is in your best interest, there's something else going on here, I'm not going to let this trial be disrupted or thrown off track.

THE COURT: All right. Does the Government have anything else you want me to ask? It seems like this Defendant is exercising his right. I can't stop him.

MR. RADHAKRISHNAN: Yes, your Honor.

MR. McADAMS: Your Honor, I think that the Court has made a very thorough inquiry and ascertained
Mr. Radhakrishnan's knowing and voluntary intent to

waive his Sixth Amendment rights and the benefits to it. I would simply, I guess, request the Court observe to the Defendant that this trial is on a schedule that has long been made; that he has been in receipt of all the discovery through his counsel at the same point in time that counsel received it and co-defendants received it; that it is anticipated to be a lengthy trial, and that this decision would not be an opportunity to seek a continuance to change the schedule of the trial. Nor if he changes his mind, which certainly the Government will have no objection to if he changes his mind at some or any future point to receive counsel, but it would not be a reason to alter the schedule of the trial and I think the defense should understand that.

THE COURT: I think that's fine. I think that's implicit, but you make a good point I should make clear.

You understand all that, Mr. Radhakrishnan?
MR. RADHAKRISHNAN: I do, your Honor.

THE COURT: All right. I haven't received anything from Mr. Thompson or Mr. Radhakrishnan that indicates that they're seeking a continuance of anything by virtue of this decision.

I am going to appoint Mr. Thompson to be standby

counsel for you, and Mr. McAdams' point is also good that I'll tell you that if at any point you change your mind about this, whether it's tomorrow or in the middle of jury selection or right before opening statements, I will allow Mr. Thompson to assume the defense, assume your defense. But I do want it to be clear that I expect that Mr. Thompson will have to be prepared at any given moment to take over without any delay. So if, for example, you do change your mind right before the start of trial, Mr. Thompson will still be expected to go forward with opening statements to the jury on the schedule that we have established, and I'm not going to entertain any continuance requests if you decide to make a change. Do you understand that?

MR. RADHAKRISHNAN: Yes, your Honor.

THE COURT: Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Unfortunately, I do understand that, your Honor. One question that I do have, your Honor, is I know that you appointed me as standby counsel. In different cases that tends to have different meaning, and I have never found a clear definition of what that means other than I need to be prepared to go forward with the trial. But I'd like some clarification on what sort of logistical support your Honor would expect my office to offer to

Mr. Radhakrishnan. I do have an investigator who has spent considerable time on this case already. I have let Mr. Radhakrishnan know that if he's representing himself my investigator will not be working full-time on his case, and I will not be working at the same level on his case that I would have otherwise been working. I just cannot do that given the number of cases we have in this district and the number of cases my office has.

On the other hand, I am more than happy, if the Court so directs, to give him all the logistical support that we can give him in terms of, for example, serving subpoenas, giving him assistance in legal research, investigation, that kind of thing. I'm happy to do it, but if I could just have some clarification from the Court on what the Court expects.

THE COURT: I think you said it well. The only question I have, and I haven't had a chance to look into it, is whether there are any restrictions in terms of what you're guided by in that respect. As long as you're comfortable with using the resources of your office in that way and it's permissible and in accordance with your guidelines, then I'm okay with it. I do want you ready so that you could assume

Mr. Radhakrishnan's defense if he has a change of heart

here, and I certainly have been through this with defendants who have had a change of heart as trial draws near.

MR. THOMPSON: I understand.

THE COURT: In terms of other levels of commitment, I expect in your role as standby counsel that you will be present for all official matters before the Court, including conferences, jury selection, going through the questionnaires, which we're going to be doing in a week or so, two weeks, whatever it is, and ultimately jury selection. I think the logistics of how we do these things is going to have to change now that we have a pro se defendant. Probably means that some of the matters which we might have held in the conference room be held in court, open court, or at least in the court, but we'll otherwise try to keep things as normal as possible.

MR. THOMPSON: I understand, your Honor. Thank you.

THE COURT: All right. Anything further?

MR. McADAMS: Your Honor, I think it goes
without saying but, since we're here, I remind

Mr. Radhakrishnan that in going forward, as opposed to
in the past when Mr. Thompson represented him in
dealings with the Government, Mr. Thompson would

communicate with us on his behalf. And that was a protection for Mr. Radhakrishnan. If he communicates with us in the future going forward, it's entirely possible that he will incriminate himself, and he should understand that, and that that can be used against him potentially in this trial; or if that communication leads to some other type of offense, I won't speculate as to what that would be, but I simply think he should recognize that his status changes when he speaks to us because now he can speak to us as opposed to before. Thank you.

THE COURT: Good point.

Do you understand that, Mr. Radhakrishnan?

MR. RADHAKRISHNAN: Yes, your Honor.

THE COURT: That same point pertains to what happens during any aspect of the trial process. For example, you might say something in a conference, pretrial conference or during jury selection or during opening statements or while you're examining a witness that could actually be a self-incriminating statement. And if you do that, the Government can take that statement and use it against you. Do you understand that?

MR. RADHAKRISHNAN: Yes, your Honor.

THE COURT: As well as anything you might say to

them in a phone call or a meeting that they would otherwise have with counsel. And you may not know that you're doing it. Do you understand that?

MR. RADHAKRISHNAN: I understand, your Honor.

THE COURT: Okay. Very good.

Mr. Traini, I saw that you wanted to say something.

MR. TRAINI: I have a question following up on what Mr. Thompson said to the Court, your Honor, about his status as standby counsel. As you know, there are ethical rules that govern our communication with people who are represented by counsel. So we also have a concern about how we should communicate during trial preparation, for example. Normally, in any multi-defendant case, the lawyers would be talking to each other at least about some things. We're not sure whether we are to be speaking to Mr. Radhakrishnan or to Mr. Thompson or under what circumstances we can do that without violating the ethical rules. So we're just a little concerned about how we handle our communications, Judge.

THE COURT: Well, I think, but you or

Mr. Thompson can correct me if you disagree, or

Mr. McAdams, I think you are free to communicate with

Mr. Radhakrishnan as you would with counsel for any

other defendant and that he understands and needs to understand that you are communicating with him not as his lawyer, but as Mr. Caramadre's lawyer, and that there may be risks associated with his communicating with you directly, and that if he needs to talk to somebody before either he answers questions or talks to you, he has standby counsel that he can refer to. That's my understanding of the ethical rules, but if you understand it to be different --

MR. TRAINI: I don't, your Honor. I just wanted to have that point clarified in the same way that Mr. McAdams wanted to clarify the point that he just spoke to the Court about so that I wanted to make sure that Mr. Radhakrishnan also understands that the communication will now be somewhat different.

THE COURT: Right. And I think this brings up another point, which is, Mr. Radhakrishnan, that we don't have a system of hybrid representation here.

Okay? So once you cross that line and say, I want to represent myself, I appoint Mr. Thompson as standby counsel, backup counsel, but he's not co-counsel.

Okay? So you're not half represented and half pro se.

You're pro se. And with that comes all the risks that I told you about. Mr. Thompson can help you. He can assist you, but he's not your associate. He's not

going to be assuming the role part-time as your attorney when you think it might be a good idea to have an attorney speaking for you. You can't put him in that position. And you can't put the Government or Mr. Traini or Mr. Lepizzera in that position. They have to know what's permissible to do, and I'm telling them it's permissible to treat you the way you say you want to be treated, which is as a pro se defendant. Do you understand all that?

MR. RADHAKRISHNAN: Yes, your Honor, I do.

MR. TRAINI: Thank you, your Honor.

THE COURT: Thank you.

Counsel come up for a minute, for Mr. Caramadre, come up.

(Side bar conference off the record.)

THE COURT: All right. Is there anything further from anyone?

MR. RADHAKRISHNAN: Your Honor, I just wanted to see if there was any special provision that could be granted to me to be allowed to bring in my phone as well as my laptop computer during any hearings or as we proceed in this case.

THE COURT: Well, your laptop computer I think is fine. What do you need a phone for?

MR. RADHAKRISHNAN: I use my phone, it's a PDA.

It helps with all of my contacts, calendars, and I use it much more than for just contacting people. Doubles as my computer, my personal computer.

THE COURT: Can you disable the phone function at least temporarily, like put it on, whatever, airplane mode or something like that?

 $\label{eq:MR.RADHAKRISHNAN: Yes, your Honor, I can do that.$ 

THE COURT: All right. I'll allow you to bring it in as long as you can guarantee me that when you're in court, you'll put it on to that mode. This is in your interest. Believe me. I've had trials where attorneys have forgotten to turn off their phones and had them ring during closing arguments, for example. That's not a good thing. You don't want that to happen.

So as long as you will do that and use it only for the purpose of calendaring and contacts and so forth, I'm okay with that.

Your laptop computer is fine. You're going to need to coordinate with Mr. Traini, with Mr. Lepizzera, the Government, about the exhibits in the case and how they're going to be presented and you may want to load them up on your computer, for example. That's possible. But that's all fine.

You're also going to have to familiarize 1 2 yourself with all the courtroom technology if you 3 intend to participate as an attorney here. You need to schedule some time with the clerk's office so that you 4 5 get familiar with this technology. You don't want to 6 be fumbling around trying to figure out how to use the 7 projectors and how to hook the laptop up to the system, 8 if you're going to use an electronic presentation 9 system of some sort. These are all the kinds of 10 logistical things you're going to need to learn how to do. 11 0kay? 12 MR. RADHAKRISHNAN: Yes. Thank you, your Honor. 13 THE COURT: All right. We'll be in recess until 14 the next time we get together, which is -- what date? 15 Next Friday, the 17th, your Honor. MR. McADAMS: 16 THE COURT: The 17th? 17 MR. McADAMS: Yes. For the jury questionnaire 18 process. 19 And you all received the color-coded THE COURT: 20 questionnaires? MR. McADAMS: Yes, your Honor. 21 22 THE COURT: Did you receive that, 23 Mr. Radhakrishnan? 24 MR. RADHAKRISHNAN: Yes, your Honor.

THE COURT: All right. Very good. All right.

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We'll see you all on the 17th.
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                (Court concluded at 3:15 p.m.)
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## CERTIFICATION

I, Anne M. Clayton, RPR, do hereby certify that the foregoing pages are a true and accurate transcription of my stenographic notes in the above-entitled case.

/s/ Anne M. Clayton
----Anne M. Clayton, RPR

August 24, 2012

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Date